

Minutes of the Meeting of the Fort Smith Regional Wellness Council

Wednesday, February 26, 2025

1400 - 1600

Location: 41 Breynat Street, Fort Smith Health Centre Board Room

Members Present:

Dianna Korol, Chair
Mary Pat Short, Council Member
Lynda Martin, Council Member
Lorraine Tordiff, Council Member
Don Webb, Council Member

Members with Regrets:

Alan Karasiuk, Council Member

Staff Present:

Lisa Sanderson, COO
Candace Dion, Executive Assistant

Guests:

Sandy Little, Territorial Manager of Mental Health & Community Wellness
Glenda Simon, Senior Indigenous Patient Advocate
Lora Sinclair, Vice Principal of JBT
Lindsay Mackenzie, Regional Manager of Primary Care
Michael Small, Vice Principal of PWK
Shaelee Keans, PWK Wellness Counsellor

#	Item and Details	Time	Responsibility
1.0	Call to Order	1400	Chair
2.0	Reflection / Prayer led by Council Member Acknowledgement of Traditional Territory led by Council Member	1400	Chair/Council Members
3.0	Sandy Little, the Territorial Manager of Mental Health and community Wellness, presented to the council on the changes to the Child and Youth Counselling Program. Questions from the council and community members. A council member raised the concern that, ultimately, we are failing our children. The funding allocations should not be the primary concern. These children are our future. We need our children to be happy, healthy, and safe. There have been a lot of traumas within the community. Drugs have taken a significant toll on families.	1401	Sandy Little

<p>Decreased funding has been given to Speech Language Pathology and Occupational Therapy, which is crucial in schools. Now, Jordan's principal has cut funding for special needs children.</p> <p>The reality is that the students are not comfortable coming to the Health Centre for CYC services, which is why the CYC school position is so important.</p> <p>A council member is disappointed to hear that we had the CYC positions taken away from the schools. She hopes that there is an opportunity to change this. We need to stop working in silence and start working together. Our children are suffering. She is wondering about testing for children with learning challenges. Where does that fall? And who will provide that care with the cuts to Jordan's Principle?</p> <p>Sandy tried to implement mechanisms to negotiate and navigate different divisions, priorities, and approaches. There was promise there, but Fort Smith never got the chance to implement that program before it was pulled. This was referenced in the evaluation. The CYC was an excellent program, considering how young and early it was.</p> <p>As for testing, she hears all the time from educational peers at schools wishing they had a psychologist on their staff. Having such a service available would help identify special needs in the children earlier. Some of the educational peers she has talked to have had some success with Jordan's Principle.</p> <p>A council member said the government should accept that our children should be a priority. They are our future. We must invest in them at all costs. It's not all education. We need to invest in their mental health.</p> <p>The vice principal of PWK brought forward that the PWK students are experiencing high levels of depression, anxiety, and low self-esteem. Getting the students in to see a counsellor at the health is difficult since they are always fully booked. Both schools need full-time counsellors. Half-time counsellors are not enough.</p> <p>The CYC position was cut off way too soon. Keep letting your elected official know that things are inadequate, and we lack the resources for our children. Each health centre counsellor has same-day appointments that students can fill. If one is unavailable, they can find help at the emergency department.</p> <p>The vice principal of JBT brought forward the concerning rise of depression and addiction within the student population. We have lost a number of students over the last two years. They are not given the necessary tools to help them navigate and overcome their life challenges. We owe it to the children in this community to have the right resources for their wellbeing and in-school counselling services. Most parents cannot take the time off to ensure their child makes it to their counselling appointment.</p> <p>The wellness worker at PWK brought forward concerns. Suicidal kids are at an all-time high rate. Getting an appointment with a health care counsellor is hard because they are always booked and busy. When they get an appointment, we stay at the health centre for hours waiting for their parents to be with their child.</p>	
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	<p>At the end of the day, they are getting sent home with no after care in place for them. They return to school the next day feeling disheartened and left out by the system. How can we make them feel better when there is no control in the situation? The issue with new counsellors is making the kids re-traumatize themselves by having them relive their story repeatedly. Without that support, they stop telling their story and seeking help. How many suicides does this community have to face until we can get that extra help?</p> <p>Sandy is using data to prove we need help. She is tracking the number of wait times, medivacs, etc. Those tools can help fight right now, so keep sending your data in.</p> <p>Rebecca Cabell has taken a full-time intermediate CYC position at the health centre.</p>		
4.0	<p>Approval of the Agenda</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motion by Don Webb • Second by Mary Pat Short <p>Carried</p> <p>Move above presentation.</p>	1401	Chair/Council Members
5.0	<p>Motion to Extend meeting to 1630</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motion by Don Webb • Second by Lorraine Tordiff <p>Carried</p>	1530	Chair/Council Members
6.0	<p>Review and Approval of Previous Minutes November 29, 2024</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motion by Lynda Martin • Second by Lorraine Tordiff <p>Carried</p>	1530	Chair/Council Members
7.0	<p>Business Arising from Previous Meeting Minutes</p> <p>Typing error on page 2, under Chair Report.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change to Diagnostic Specialist <p>The EA updated the council on the boardroom's enlarged Mission, Values, and Vision posters. The request has been sent to NTHSSA Communications, and the posters are being enlarged. There are no dates as to when they will be completed and received.</p>	1531	Chair/Council Members
8.0	New Business		
8.1	<p>COO Report</p> <p>The COO provided a verbal summary of her report; see attached.</p>	1536	COO

	<p>The council asks the EA to invite Lindsay Mackenzie, Regional Manager of Primary Care, and Melanie Kearley, Community Health Nurse, Public Health, to speak at a future RWC meeting on the health café opening at PWK.</p> <p>A council member asked the COO if she had an idea of the cost for the employee, we are training for MDR and the cost of sending our equipment back and forth to Hay River.</p> <p>The COO will ask the Regional Manager of Operations for this information, and she will present it at the next meeting.</p> <p>The council is disappointed with the timeline for opening the secure room.</p> <p>It has been inspected, and it is up to infrastructure to fix the deficiencies. They are looking for funding. Before we can open it, we need to consider the safety of our patients and staff.</p>		
8.2	<p>Chairpersons Report</p> <p>The Chair provided a verbal summary of her report to the council; see attached.</p>	1546	Chair
8.3	<p>The Chair asked the Council to accept the COO and Chair Reports.</p> <p>Motion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moved by Mary Pat Short Second by Lynda Martin <p>Carried</p>	1600	Chair/Council Members
	<p>Motion to Extend meeting to 1615</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Motion by Lynda Martin Second by Mary Pat Short <p>Carried</p>	1600	
9.0	Council Member Observations and Comments		
	<p>DW: Raised his concern regarding the secure room. Reach out to our health minister and MLAs for funding.</p> <p>MPS: When you are sent out for X-rays or tests, how are the results explained to you?</p> <p>Results sharing is practitioner specific. It is their discussion to have. Patients are entitled to their results from the Medical Records.</p> <p>LT: It is excellent that student nurses are coming. We must give them a positive experience, so they return and work for us. Can we get statistics on bed usage in the ER?</p> <p>The students will work in the Primary Care department alongside their preceptors.</p> <p>The COO will bring the stats to the next meeting.</p>	1600	Council Members

	DK: Thank you to all the staff for going above and beyond. She hasn't heard nearly as many complaints/concerns as before. LM: No comments at this time.		
10.0	Decision Items and Recommendations to the NTHSSA Leadership Council Deferred to next meeting.	1615	Chair/Council Members
11.0	Review of Action Items/Work Plan Deferred to next meeting.	1615	Chair/Council Members
12.0	Adjournment The next meeting will be held on March 12, 2025 @ 1400.	1615	Chair/Council Members

	ACTION ITEM	OWNER	ASSIGNED	DUE	COMPLETED
1	Health Centre Cafeteria opening.	COO	RM, Raphael Jeansonne-Gélinas	March 2024	On Hold
2	Once the website has been updated, we can retrieve a copy of the Medical Travel Booklet. New pamphlets will be distributed to communities.	COO	COO	April 2025	
3	Chair, COO & Council Member to revise the work plan layout.	Chair	COO	January 2024	On Going
4	Request an update on Trailcross programming and the status of the Trailcross building from Kristy Jones.	COO	COO	April 2025	
5	Tim VanOverliw will be asked to attend an RWC meeting virtually to answer questions regarding Medical Travel.	COO	COO	June 2025	
6	Provide an update on Mental Health Renewal.	COO	COO	September 2024	On Going
7	Work on increasing Inpatient Occupancy.	COO & Council	COO	September 2024	
8	Enlarge the Mission, Values, and Vision posters in the boardroom.	COO	EA	Jan 2025	On Going

X Dianna Korol

Approved by Dianna Korol
Fort Smith RWC Chair